Progressive Calvinism

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Isolation Resulting From Holding The Doctrine Of Obedience To God First

The idea that God must be obeyed rather than a government should be a cardinal doctrine in any creed that is theistic in character.

When men either (1) by *individual* violence or (2) by *collective* violence (especially, by improper laws) require disobedience to the plain commandments of God, then those who profess the Christian religion should say: Obey God and disobey men.

With the release of the next issue (December 1958), we shall be completing four years of publishing PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. Naturally, people have written to us and spoken to us about the ideas we have published. Not one has ever expressed hearty agreement with the proposition that we must *always* obey God rather than men. "Nary" a one!

Readers look at us with a worried look on their faces; they ask, would you rebel against a government? By their very question they betray that they themselves have *no real determination* to obey God rather than men, come what may. They appear afraid to obey God when the laws of men are to the contrary, and they seem to mistrust their own or anyone else's judgment when it disagrees with the "laws" which a government is enforcing — even though those "laws" are plainly contrary to the law of God. They seem to let their own doubt, or unwillingness to make up their mind, excuse them from stoutly obeying the law of God.

Yes, if a lone *individual* violates the law of God, *then* they may be in favor of obeying God (because they assume that there is no danger to self in resisting such a lone and maybe weak *individual*). But for them it is altogether different if it is a case of a powerful group — such as a state or a labor union — violating the commandments of God. Under those circumstances we have yet to hear from one member* of the denomination to which we belong who *heartily* approves unflinching *resistance*. It is not surprising, then, that many ask with obvious fear about the consequences, You would not rebel, would you?

At the same time it must be admitted that our friends do not boldly say, You *should not* rebel. They seem to be reluctant to go that far. They genuinely "halt between two opinions" as the Israelites once "halted" between worshipping Baal or worshipping God. The cases are parallel.

In the *Declarations* of the Progressive Calvinism League, the fourth declaration reads:

> *(a) Promote a single rule of morality; and (b) reject a dual rule, namely, one rule for individuals and a conflicting rule for groups.*

*There may be many such members but we have not met them or heard from them.

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The protestant denomination to which we belong has in specific cases officially repudiated the principle that God should be obeyed rather than men. It has officially decided, for example, that *if the state approves an un-Biblical divorce and remarriage, then the new marriage is valid.* However, it has never dared to declare that a new sexual relation between Mr. *A* and Mrs. *B* is valid, if the first marriage of Mr. *A* and the first marriage of Mrs. *B* have *not* been dissolved *by state action,* and if the new un-Biblical relationship has *not* been approved *by state action.* Obviously, the denomination in this case sets the law of men higher than the law of God. Consequently, it is not surprising (to us) that no fellow member has *unqualifiedly approved* our proposition, that it is more important to obey God than to obey men. On that subject we occupy a lonely and even exposed position.

The worried question, You would not disobey the law (of men) would you, is a difficult and delicate question. The answer is not easy. We are not sure that we can answer the question to the satisfaction of others, or even genuinely consistently (and consequently to our own full satisfaction).

Though the answer may be difficult we shall devote several issues to the attempt. We appeal to readers and ask their patience and indulgence. For, in the final squeeze between conflicting ideas, we hold tenaciously to the great principle stated by the Apostle Peter, namely, *We must obey God rather than men* (Acts 5:29b). If we are wrong, it is because we hold to that.*

Examples Of Political Issues Which We Shall Analyze From A Scriptural Viewpoint

We propose to discuss in this and early issues various controversial *political* issues — (1) whether to obey God or government and when; (2) what *legitimate* powers, that is, *authority,* any government can ever have; (3) whether the authority of governments derives from men or from God; (4) whether the South was right about slavery, about nullification, secession and civil war;

*There are, of course, two distinct questions: (1) whether to obey God or men; and (2) what the law of God really is. We are not here discussing the latter, but only cases when a man fully realizes that the law of God conflicts with the law of men, and deliberately decides (sometimes from fear) to obey the law of men rather than the law of God (usually on the ground that he is required by God to obey the government!).

(5) whether desegregation orders of the Supreme Court should be obeyed; (6) whether churches may properly operate on a segregated basis; (7) how resolve the "colored question" throughout the world; (8) what does the United States "owe" to the "undeveloped nations"; (9) should there be any higher authority in the United States than the Constitution?

We can answer these questions summarily:

(1) We should obey God and not governments when they require of us what God prohibits; (2) governments have *authority* only to resist internal and external evil (with evil defined as in the Decalogue; anything beyond that is illegitimate *power*, not *authority;* (3) the *power* of governments derives solely from men (but the *authority* of governments derives solely from God); (4) the South was wrong about slavery but right about nullification; in regard to secession, we are not sure; we have presently no final opinion; (5) *compulsory* desegregation orders issued by the Supreme Court should be frustrated and in that manner should be "disobeyed"; (6) whether churches should be segregated is purely a matter of "preference" — it being as right to be a segregated church as a desegregated church; (7) the "colored problem" in the world requires a solution which will be (or should be) acceptable to all nations, and no affront to any because the principle involved is universal, beneficent and honorable; (8) the United States owes nothing to the so-called "undeveloped nations" besides "brotherly love" *strictly and correctly defined;* and finally (9) there is indeed a higher authority in the United States than the Constitution; however there was no obvious conflict between the *original* constitution and that still "higher" authority, with one conspicuous exception; but *presently* there are many conflicts between the *laws* of the United States and the Law of God.

The subjects mentioned are of portentous importance. It is desirable to treat them systematically. This publication, however, is written from month to month under conditions which make a wholly systematic presentation beyond our ability. We shall, therefore, discuss the kind of questions which have been enumerated in our usual desultory manner. The presentation may not be wholly coherent, but in the end we hope the general description will be internally consistent, scriptural, and realistic.

Specific Tyranny Today In The United States

Nearly everyone knows about the Mennonite and Amish people, who in this country are also known as a segment of the "Pennsylvania Dutch." They occupy several counties in Pennsylvania, especially Lancaster County which has been one of the highly productive agricultural counties in the United States. That is where the "Pennsylvania" part of their name comes from. (There are Mennonite communities in several other states.)

The "Dutch" part of their name often involves a misunderstanding. Most of the so-called "Pennsylvania Dutch" came from the Palatinate, several of the provinces on the River Rhine, upstream from The Netherlands. These people were Germans and not Netherlanders.

However, they do get their name of *Mennonite* from a Netherlander, one Menno, the son of a man named Simon; the full name by which he is known to history is Menno Simons (1492-1559), the *s* really being an abbreviation for *son;* in Netherlands history he is known as Menno Simonson. He was a member of the Brethren of the Common Life, a communal organization with a brotherhood house in the Netherlands.

The Mennonites are divided into sixteen branches, one of which is the Amish. The Amish use hooks and eyes on their clothes, but not buttons.

Mennonite confessions contain the customary evangelical doctrines of God, the Fall of Man, the authority of the Scriptures and the sacraments. Good conduct is considered more important than doctrinal points. Divorce is condemned, except for adultery. They refuse to perform military service, take oaths, and they are "separatists" in matters pertaining to the state.

Presently the Amish are being persecuted by the government of the United States. We quote an editorial from *The Wall Street Journal,* page 10, under date of November 4, 1958.

Amish Security and Amish Freedom

> The Amish people, a Mennonite sect, have been here for a very long time. To most of us, the Amish are a quaint group whom we see now and then in the newsreels or The National Geographic driving their horses and buggies slowly to and from farm and marketplace. The men are all bearded and the women all bonneted.

But to their neighbors, the Amish are a law-abiding, God-fearing, industrious farm people who raise their children to respect their elders and to assume a responsibility for their relatives too old to work. In many ways, their way of life might be a pattern the rest of us would do well to follow.

But the Amish are now lawbreakers, because America, in its emphasis on security, has transgressed a freedom they hold to be paramount. Recently an auctioneer in Canton, Ohio, sold off livestock seized from Amish farmers by the U.S. Government because the Amishmen had refused to pay the Old Age and Survivors Insurance System levies.

The tax, they say, is against their religion. To pay the tax is to admit that the Government has a responsibility for aged Amish, and to admit that is to deny their own responsibility and thus one of their strictest religious precepts. The records in the two counties where the Government seized 28 head of livestock from 15 Amish farmers and cash assets of 50 others show that no Amishman had ever sought public assistance of any kind.

Has this emphasis on security touched only the Amish? No; farmers are fined for growing wheat without a Government say-so because other farmers want it that way in their search for security. Congress has permitted the labor law to be so written that men can be forced to join a labor union in order to hold a job.

The laws that require these things are not, it should be remembered, laws enacted to prevent evil or wrongdoing. It is not wrong, we think, for a man to have the freedom to work without having to join any association of other men in order to do so. It is not wrong for the Amish to reject the idea of Government responsibility for their own aged members.

To the contrary. What is wrong is the growing emphasis in our society on security. The wrong comes about when, in the name of the alleged greater good of all, collective security is permitted to disregard or destroy individual rights or beliefs or freedoms.

Furthermore, it wrongs more than the individual. For as one man's freedom is lost, freedom for all men is diminished as well. And though security is one of man's highest aspirations, perhaps we had better remember that security without freedom is history's bitterest jest. And there is a point where over-emphasis on one can slowly, but inexorably, destroy the other.

Something is wrong somewhere, but it is not the resistance of the Amish. We consider them to be in the right. In this case of the People of the United States *versus* the Amish the right is on the side of the Amish.

The rest of us who have put on the statute books the *Old Age and Survivors Insurance System* are guilty of tyranny against the Amish. We have put man-made laws in our Statutes, which are beyond the proper range of government. We are exercising power not authority; authority is *legitimate* power and legitimate power *only.*

The statute books of our governments have many laws *contrary to the law of God,* as in the case of this Old Age and Survivors Insurance System.

We cite this Amish case not as an exception but as a symptom of systematic evil. The correction for this evil must originate in restricting government to its legitimate functions, and in obeying God rather than men.

Three Great Americans And A Fourth Even Greater

Three of the great men of the United States are Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), Robert E. Lee (1807-1870) and "Stonewall" Jackson (1824-1863). Of these three Lincoln was in one significant respect the greatest.

All three were involved in the Civil War of the United States. Jackson was killed in the third year of the war, aged 39. Lincoln was assassinated at the end of the war, aged 56. Lee lived the longest, 63 years.

"Stonewall" Jackson was a devout Presbyterian elder, a mathematician, and a brilliant military tactician. But he was on the wrong side, the side of slavery. He went along with his community. He did not stand alone.

Lee was a religious man, an evangelical. But he finally went along with the State of Virginia, in the Secession caused by the slavery controversy. In a way, Virginia had charge of Lee's conscience. Loyalty to a state apparently superseded Lee's individual judgment of right or wrong.

Lincoln too, *in his way,* although no churchman as either Jackson or Lee, was a religious person. Certainly he was "saturated" as few men ever have been with the moral law of the Hebrew-Christian religions. What did Lincoln do? He did not go along with his community, he did not surrender his conscience to any group, whether called church or state or what have you; he pondered deeply the whole question at issue and *made up his own mind.* He acted in a manner which gives conclusive evidence that he did his own thinking individualistically, independently and responsibly to God. In that respect he must be rated a greater man than either Lee or Jackson. We are not comparing nobleness of character, but principles of responsibility.

Lincoln stood solitarily alone. He was not prepared to break a contract (the Constitution) to destroy slavery where it historically existed. He was prepared to fight any extension of it. His position was one of "deadly moderation."

Patriotism is one of the grandest virtues. The decline of patriotism in the United States is to be sadly deplored. Lee and Jackson were patriots for their communities. But patriotism must not be loyalty to what may be wrong, but determination to help the community to do what is right. Patriotism to what is right is greater than patriotism to any human government which is wrong.

The attitude of the South toward slavery is understandable but not excusable. The idea of the South that some of its other interests, in this case illegitimately, had been sacrificed to the North was undoubtedly justified. The original beginning of the thought of Secession was based on a valid grievance, the tariff policy of the North, *which was contrary to the commandments of God.* If there had not been the violation of that right, the South might not have become so sensitive of its other sectional interests, including slavery. The North was guilty, too.

It is regrettable if moralists or churchmen teach that you are required to obey a government even when it breaks the commandments of God. No man should *lightly* resist his government.

Great provocation is undoubtedly required to justify rebellion, because of the portentous consequences. Nevertheless, on vital issues men must choose to obey God or men.

Consider the German clergyman, Pastor Martin Niemoller. In World War II he offered his services as a submarine commander to Hitler! It is hard to understand how a man working to promote the Kingdom of God could offer his services to Hitler. Curiously, too, Niemoller is soft toward communism. Religion indeed appears to be an inadequate guarantee of *first loyalty to God.*

The most loyal and patriotic citizens of this country will be men who are loyal to the requirements of the Law of God first and always. If that means resistance, then that is where duty lies. Consider the Amish, whose case we have just described.

But there is a fourth man whom we feel constrained to set higher than Lee, or Stonewall Jackson, or Abraham Lincoln. We refer to John Caldwell Calhoun, the famous South Carolinian. The *principles* of government which Calhoun favored come closer, in our estimation, to being in conformity with the Law of God than those of any other man who has undertaken clearly to state what his political principles are. The future of the United States, in our opinion, depends largely on whether the people will accept the principles of Calhoun or whether they will depart even further than they have already departed.

For us, Calhoun is the greatest of American political thinkers. We propose to provide sufficient information about the ideas of Calhoun so that readers can make up their own minds.

John C. Calhoun, The Man

In 1782, toward the end of the Revolutionary War, John Caldwell Calhoun was born on March 18 to Patrick Calhoun and his wife, Martha Caldwell Calhoun. Patrick was a frontier farmer near Abbeville in western South Carolina, competent, liberty loving, courageous, of Scotch-Irish stock, with a Covenanter (Presbyterian) background. He was a leader in his community. His son, John, was as much a product of the American frontier as Lincoln.

John Calhoun's early schooling was limited. When in his teens he attended for two years a school of his brother-in-law. At 20 he enrolled in Yale University and graduated two years later.

Then for one year he attended a law school in Litchfield, Connecticut.

The main events in Calhoun's career thereafter are as follows:

YEARS	AGE	EVENT
1806-8	24-26	Practiced law in South Carolina
1808-9	26-27	State legislator
1811	29	Married Floride Colhoun, eleven years his junior, daughter of his cousin
1811-17	29-35	Congressman
1817-25	35-43	Secretary of War
1825-32	43-50	Vice-President of the United States
1832-44	50-62	Senator
1844-45	62-63	Secretary of State
1845-50	63-68	Senator

Calhoun died on March 31, 1850, and was buried in St. Philip's churchyard, Charleston, S. C.

The probabilities are that Calhoun would have been successor to Andrew Jackson as president of the United States, had Calhoun's wife, Floride, been willing to recognize Peggy Eaton socially, as Andrew Jackson expected Floride to do. Floride did not approve of Peggy's history; Jackson became furious; and then acted in a manner to promote Martin Van Buren becoming his successor as president; Calhoun's ambitions to be president were blasted.

Nevertheless, the record is impressive — congressman at 29; secretary of war at 35; vice-president at 43; senator at 50; secretary of state at 62.

In private life Calhoun was a farmer, an activity which he loved. In the Piedmont in western South Carolina he had a plantation known as Fort Hill. It is now the site of Clemson College, the state agricultural college, which has taken its name from Calhoun's son-in-law, Clemson. Calhoun was a slave owner and a defender of slavery, a subject which will be discussed later.

Calhoun is usually described as a Calvinist, and although on many subjects his thinking was Calvinistic, he was not a convinced adherent of the Christian religion. Essentially, he was a Unitarian. He definitely refused to accept for himself the idea of salvation by the grace of God. But he had been cast by his parents into a grim Calvinist mold in his thinking about duty, work, integrity, responsibility to fellow men. Until far into his maturity he had difficulty

looking at relaxation and amusement in any other way than with suspicion.

Margaret Coit in her book, *John C. Calhoun; American Portrait,* about which more in a moment, tells about the hospitality of Calhoun at Fort Hill: ". . . 'open house' was the rule. . . . The choicest dishes were selected for the visitor, but for a guest who had the ill judgment to decline an invitation to family prayers, Calhoun's command was peremptory: 'Saddle the man's horse and let him go'." (Page 390.)

Calhoun was a strong family man. He faithfully wrote members of his household. The Calhouns had eight children of whom six survived early youth. Calhoun's public obligations irked his wife, and the relationship between them was not always placid. He was away, *alone* in Washington, fifteen of the thirty-nine years of his married life! When Floride would go into a tantrum, Calhoun would retreat to his office, of which he *only* had the key, and to which Floride did not have free admittance. Mrs. Coit writes: [Floride] would storm through the house and the grounds, locking every window, every door, every closet, storeroom, smokehouse and outhouse on the plantation. She would call for the carriage and drive off, leaving her husband to break down the doors and do the explaining to . . . gentlemen . . . [guests] when he brought them home for a long-planned dinner party." A flower garden he had planted carefully with his own hands, she had the slaves dig up during the night and before morning had every flower replanted!

Physically, Calhoun was a spare man, six foot two inches in height. His health was frequently impaired by over-work and tension.

Calhoun was one of the greatest of his race, with a lucid and powerful mind. Webster, impressed by Calhoun's intellect, wrote that Calhoun could have "demolished Newton, Calvin," or even John Locke as a logician.

In regard to duty Calhoun wrote: "The reward is in the struggle more than in victory . . . I hold the duties of life to be greater than life itself, and that in performing them manfully, even against hope, our labor is not lost . . ." This is similar to the great words of Prince William of Orange (known as "the Silent") who wrote the memorable words: "It is not necessary to hope in order to undertake, nor to succeed in order to persevere."

For more information on the life of Calhoun readers are referred to the three volume work by Charles Wiltse, entitled *John C. Calhoun,* (Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., Indianapolis, 1944-51, 3 vol.), and to Margaret L. Coit's *John C. Calhoun: American Portrait,* Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1950, 593 pages. Mrs. Coit has in her very interesting volume a great amount of informative and illuminating material. We recommend the book to readers,* because it will be rewarding reading to everybody.

In regard to Calhoun's own writings we propose to comment on those directly.

Calhoun's, "A Disquisition On Government"

In 1842, Calhoun, at the age of 60, began work on a treatise on government. It was not printed until after his death (which as previously noted, occurred in 1850). It carries the title, *A Disquisition on Government.*

This is not a large book. It is 80 pages long in ordinary type; (not much more than two issues of this publication with its smaller type). But the book is, we believe, a classic in content, style, simplicity, integrity, and profundity. We consider it the greatest text on government ever written.

This book is obtainable in the American Heritage Series, either cloth bound or paper bound, published by the Liberal Arts Press, New York.

To readers who subscribe for 1959 to this publication, we shall be pleased to send gratis a paper bound copy of Calhoun's *A Disquisition on Government.*

If students of government everywhere would devote as much time to Calhoun's ideas on government as they probably devote to Plato's *Republic* there would be an immeasurable improvement in political thought.

It is in his *political* thinking that we believe Calhoun must be classified as a Calvinist. His ultimate premises are, we believe, more Biblical than those of any writer whose works we have read, whether they be Plato, Augustine, Thomas of Aquinas, Groen van Prinsterer, Edmund Burke, Montesquieu, Abraham Kuyper, Macaulay, Acton, Lincoln. Some of these men, on some one point,

*Mrs. Coit does not understand economics and frequently reveals unwarranted hostility to capitalism.

may have seen some matter more clearly than Calhoun. We are judging them by their total ideas and not by some fragment.

To illustrate Calhoun's thought we are in the next article quoting four of the opening pages of his *Disquisition,* and appending thereto our reactions.

Quotation From A Disquisition On Government

(First Four and One-half Pages)

(The reader is advised to read all material by John Calhoun himself in the left-hand column first, before reading any of our comments. We are indebted to The Liberal Arts Press, New York, for their permission to quote from their publication of Calhoun's Disquisition.)

CALHOUN'S TEXT

1. In order to have a clear and just conception of the nature and object of government, it is indispensable to understand correctly what that constitution or law of our nature is in which government originates, or to express it more fully and accurately — that law without which government would not and with which it must necessarily exist. Without this, it is as impossible to lay any solid foundation for the science of government as it would be to lay one for that of astronomy without a like understanding of that constitution or law of the material world according to which the several bodies composing the solar system mutually act on each other and by which they are kept in their respective spheres. The first question, accordingly, to be considered, What is that constitution

COMMENTS

1. Calhoun begins his analysis of the character of government by raising the cosmological question: What is the character of man? If he had failed to begin with this question of cosmology, his theory on government would have remained suspended in mid-air — without a foundation. Calhoun realized that his doctrine about the character of man had to be antecedent to a doctrine of government, in other words, creation and cosmology are antecedent to grace (including common grace) both in time and in importance. Incidentally, it should be recognized that Calhoun is described as a "solitary thinker." He was not a bookish man; his opponents in the Senate declared that his thinking was "metaphysical" in character. Undoubtedly, as l e s s - profound thinkers, they were objecting to

or law of our nature without which government would not exist and with which its existence is necessary?

2. In considering this, I assume as an incontestable fact that man is so constituted as to be a social being. His inclinations and wants, physical and moral, irresistibly impel him to associate with his kind; and he has, accordingly, never been found, in any age or country, in any state other than the social. In no other, indeed, could he exist, and in no other — were it possible for him to exist — could he attain to a full development of his moral and intellectual faculties or raise himself, in the scale of being, much above the level of the brute creation.

his going back to the "constitution and law of our natures," that is, back to creation.

2. Calhoun here categorically denies the idea that the natural state of man is one of isolation. For Calhoun *society* is man's natural state. Calhoun does not engage in childish imaginations about a state of nature in which man was in a better physical and moral condition because he was in isolation. This single paragraph puts the thinking of Calhoun on an altogether different foundation than the thinking of Rousseau or anyone influenced by Rousseau.

Nevertheless, the paragraph is not so explicit as it might well have been made. Calhoun restricts himself to saying that man's "inclinations and wants, physical and moral, irresistibly impel him to associate with his kind." What Calhoun wrote is true, but he could have been more specific if, instead of referring to "inclinations" and "irresistible" events, he had referred explicitly to Ricardo's Law of Association. Then the sentence might have read "man's knowledge of where his advantages lay convinced him that it was highly profitable to associate and cooperate with his fellows": or it might be put even

more simply by saying "man's discovery that there is great mutual benefit from association with other human beings who are *unequally unequal,* irresistibly impelled him to associate with other men."

3. I next assume also as a fact not less incontestable that, while man is so constituted as to make the social state necessary to his existence and the full development of his faculties, this state itself cannot exist without government. The assumption rests on universal experience. In no age or country has any society or community ever been found, whether enlightened or savage, without government of some description.

3. In this paragraph Calhoun in effect assumes "total depravity." He says that a society "cannot exist without government." Then he appeals to universal experience and to history. Calhoun here does not reason as a metaphysician from cause to effect, but from effect to cause; he reasons *a posteriori* and not *a priori.* If he had reasoned in the latter way he would have said that government is necessary because of man's depravity. Readers will remember that in our third issue, in March 1955, we referred to "Epstean's Law." Albert J. Nock in his *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man* tells how Epstean at a luncheon while shaking a forefinger at Nock said with great emphasis "I tell you, if self-preservation is the first law of human conduct, exploitation is the second." In this third paragraph in his *Disquisition,* Calhoun is indicating that government is absolutely necessary because of man's disposition to "exploit" his fellows. Calhoun's paragraph two is Epstean's "self-preservation" and

Calhoun's paragraph three is Epstean's "propensity to exploit."

4. Having assumed these as unquestionable phenomena of our nature, I shall, without further remark, proceed to the investigation of the primary and important question, What is that constitution of our nature which, while it impels man to associate with his kind, renders it impossible for society to exist without government?

4. Calhoun here poses the problem in his own language.

5. The answer will be found in the fact (not less incontestable than either of the others) that, while man is created for the social state and is accordingly so formed as to feel what affects others as well as what affects himself, he is, at the same time, so constituted as to feel more intensely what affects him directly than what affects him indirectly through others, or, to express it differently, he is so constituted that his direct or individual affections are stronger than his sympathetic or social feelings. I intentionally avoid the expression "selfish feelings" as applicable to the former, because, as commonly used, it implies an unusual excess of the individual over the social feelings in the person to whom it is applied and, consequently,

5. This is a marvelous paragraph. This does not put the answer to the question in the stereotyped and threadbare slogans which are used without understanding what they mean. In this paragraph Calhoun gives a Calvinist answer without impairing the quality of the answer, but he avoids the lingo of Calvinism. Furthermore, he has the inestimable advantage of expressing himself in a most moderate kind of language. He even avoids the word "selfish." Calhoun simply says that a man's "direct or individual affections are stronger than his sympathetic or social feelings." Calhoun declares that we "feel more intensely what affects ourselves" than "what affects [us] indirectly through others." He calls that phenomena a law "as unques-

something depraved and vicious. My object is to exclude such inference and to restrict the inquiry exclusively to facts in their bearings on the subject under consideration, viewed as mere phenomena appertaining to our nature — constituted as it is; and which are as unquestionable as is that of gravitation or any other phenomenon of the material world.

tionable as is that of gravitation." In our language, Calhoun is simply saying that we were created that way. He is not talking about providence nor common grace, but the character of creation.

6. In asserting that our individual are stronger than our social feelings, it is not intended to deny that there are instances, growing out of peculiar relations — as that of a mother and her infant — or resulting from the force of education and habit over peculiar constitutions, in which the latter have overpowered the former; but these instances are few and a l w a y s regarded as something extraordinary. The deep impression they make, whenever they occur, is the strongest proof that they are regarded as exceptions to some general and well-understood law of our nature, just as some of the minor powers of the material world are apparently to gravitation.

6. This paragraph is necessary as a rebuttal to those who might declare as the rule, or cite certain examples as the rule, when, as a matter of fact, they are the exception.

7. I might go farther and assert this to be a phenomenon not of our nature only, but of all animated existence throughout its entire range, so far as

7. Calhoun here engages in a sound generalization. He calls it the law of self-preservation, the "all pervading and essential law of animated existence."

our knowledge extends. It would, indeed, seem to be essentially connected with the great law of self-preservation which pervades all that feels, from man down to the lowest and most insignificant reptile or insect. In none is it stronger than in man. His social feelings may, indeed, in a state of safety and abundance, combined with high intellectual and moral culture, acquire great expansion and force, but not so great as to overpower this all-pervading and essential law of animated existence.

8. But that constitution of our nature which makes us feel more intensely what affects us directly than what affects us indirectly through others necessarily leads to conflict between individuals. Each, in consequence, has a greater regard for his own safety or happiness than for the safety or happiness of others, and, where these come in opposition, is ready to sacrifice the interests of others to his own. And hence the tendency to a universal state of conflict between individual and individual, accompanied by the connected passions of suspicion, jealousy, anger, and revenge — followed by insolence, fraud, and cruelty — and, if not prevented by some controlling power, ending in a

8. This is the second part of Epstean's Law, the propensity of each man to look out for himself at the expense of his neighbors rather than to conduct his relations with them on a basis of mutual cooperation (which means no violence, adultery, theft, fraud, covetousness).

state of universal discord and confusion destructive of the social state and the ends for which it is ordained. This controlling power, wherever vested or by whomsoever exercised, is *Government.*

9. It follows, then, that man is so constituted that government is necessary to the existence of society, and society to his existence and the perfection of his faculties. It follows also that government has its origin in this twofold constitution of his nature: the sympathetic or social feelings constituting the remote, and the individual or direct the proximate, cause.

9 and 10. These are elucidating paragraphs. It gets down to this: Creation and sin make governments necessary. Both are ingredients; neither creation nor sin can be removed from consideration if the explanation is to be adequate.

10. If man had been differently constituted in either particular — if, instead of being social in his nature, he had been created without sympathy for his kind and independent of others for his safety and existence; or if, on the other hand, he had been so created as to feel more intensely what affected others than what affected himself (if that were possible) or even had this supposed interest been equal — it is manifest that in either case there would have been no necessity for government, and that none would ever have existed. But although society and government are thus

intimately connected with and dependent on each other — of the two society is the greater. It is the first in the order of things and in the dignity of its object; that of society being primary — to preserve and perfect our race — and that of government secondary and subordinate — to preserve and perfect society. Both are, however, necessary to the existence and well-being of our race and equally of divine ordination.

11. I have said, if it were possible for man to be so constituted as to feel what affects others more strongly than what affects h i m s e l f, or even as strongly — because it may be well doubted whether the stronger feeling or affection of individuals for themselves, combined with a feebler and subordinate feeling or affection for others, is not in beings of limited reason and faculties a constitution necessary to their preservation and existence. If reserved — if their feelings and affections were stronger for others than for themselves or even as strong, the necessary result would seem to be that all individuality would be lost and boundless, and remediless disorder and confusion would ensue. For each, at the same moment intensely participating in all the conflicting emo-

11. This paragraph is worthy of the most careful reading. This paragraph explains why government is necessary because of the character of creation as well as because of the character of sin. In plainer language than Calhoun uses, this is what he says: if man had not been created *selfish*, there would be "remediless disorder and confusion." Why would there be remediless disorder and confusion? Because man is finite, or as Calhoun says, man has "limited reason and faculties."

In this paragraph John Calhoun takes a position which would forever keep him from accepting the s o c i a l gospel, which declares that we should do exactly what Calhoun says would cause boundless confusion. What Calhoun disparages is exactly the definition

tions of those around him, would, of course, forget himself and all that concerned him immediately, in his officious intermeddling with the affairs of all others, which, from his limited reason and faculties, he could neither properly understand nor manage. Such a state of things would, as far as we can see, lead to endless disorder and confusion not less destructive to our race than a state of anarchy. It would, besides, be remediless — for government would be impossible or, if it could by possibility exist, its object would be reversed. Selfishness would have to be encouraged, and benevolence discouraged. Individuals would have to be encouraged by rewards to become more selfish, and deterred by punishments from being too benevolent; and this, too, by a government administered by those who, on the supposition, w o u l d have the greatest aversion for selfishness and the highest admiration for benevolence.

given to *agape* by Bishop Anders Nygren in his *Agape and Eros,* which contains the fundamental doctrine underlying the social gospel everywhere, the doctrine of the Niebuhrs, Oxnams, Bennetts, the World Council of Churches, etc.

We ourselves, in earlier issues of Progressive Calvinism, have endeavored to make the point that the exaggerated doctrine of *agape* taught in the churches, if accomplished, would be mischievous and would destroy society. We concur completely with Calhoun.

12. To the Infinite Being, the Creator of all, belongs exclusively the care and superintendence of the whole. He, in his infinite wisdom, and goodness, has allotted to every class of animated beings its condition and appropriate functions and has endowed each with feelings,

12. Calhoun here rejects the doctrine that many people accept from Cain, namely, that we are our brothers' keeper. Calhoun says that only to God "belongs exclusively the care and superintendence of the whole." If we were indeed our brothers' keeper then the second table of

instincts, capacities, and faculties best adapted to its allotted condition. To man, he has assigned the social and political state as best adapted to develop the great capacities and faculties, intellectual and moral, with which he has endowed him, and has, accordingly, constituted him so as not only to impel him into the social state, but to make government necessary for his preservation and well-being.

the Law should read, Thou shalt love thy neighbor *more than* thyself; actually it reads thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*. Calhoun simply puts that idea in his own words and in an illuminating manner in his paragraphs 11 and 12.

The rest of Calhoun's *Disquisition* is in the same vein — fundamental, compact, loaded with thought, realistic.

Calhoun On Slavery, The Question On Which Calhoun Was Wrong

The darkest side of Calhoun's ideas are those related to slavery, and it will be well to discuss them candidly. Basically, on the question of slavery Calhoun was wrong, and all the arguments in the world will fail to exonerate him. However, it is only fair to explain his views with some thoroughness.

In 1816 (when 34 years old) Calhoun in a speech on "the Treaty-Making Power" referred to "that odious traffic" meaning the importation of slaves from Africa, known as the slave trade. He said: "I feel ashamed of such a tolerance [the "tolerance" in the Constitution of permitting the slave trade to continue until 1808], and take a large part of the disgrace, as I represent a part of the Union, by whose influence it might be supposed to have been introduced" (John S. Jenkins, *Life of John Caldwell Calhoun.*)

Calhoun's son-in-law, Clemson, quit being a planter, declaring "I can do better for my family and myself" by not being a planter. Clemson suggested that he would "rent out his Negroes." Calhoun resisted that, saying that a planter who utilized Negro labor without owning the Negroes themselves would not be under adequate

inducement to take good care of them. ". . . The object of him who hires is generally to make the most he can out of them, without regard to their comfort or health, and usually to the utter neglect of the children and the sick." To prevent Clemson renting out his Negroes, Calhoun indicated that he would buy them himself, but that it would be 'financially disastrous' for him to do so. (From Mrs. Coit's *John C. Calhoun: American Portrait,* page 298.)

Calhoun himself had slaves estimated to number from 30 to 90. Calhoun's son, Andrew, had a plantation in Alabama where the heat made work burdensome. Father and son did some rotation of slaves in order to make it easier for them. Andrew would have the slaves for six months, and then would send them back to the hill country of Calhoun's South Carolina. Mary Bates in *The Private Life of John C. Calhoun,* tells of a Negro mother who preferred to stay with the Calhouns in South Carolina with her master and mistress even if her children went to Alabama. Calhoun responded to this characteristically: "I could not think of her remaining without her children, and as she chose to stay, we retained her youngest son, a boy of twelve."

The slave trade, that is, bringing additional slaves from Africa, was not officially ended until 1808; actually there was some illegal traffic after that date. The Negroes with whom Calhoun (and the South of his time) was dealing included individuals with the most primitive background — men and women directly from the jungles of Africa, illiterate, with altogether different values in regard to morals, industry and religion, and whom we too would have regarded as savages. The undoubted wrongs done these people may in most cases have been a blessing in disguise for many of them themselves, and certainly for their descendents, for by no stretch of the imagination can life for Negroes in the United States be considered to be less attractive generally than Negro life in Africa.

Calhoun was acutely aware of the differences between the races in his day and environment. Whereas the white man had thousands of years of liberty and experience in orderly government, the Negro had no such background. Calhoun was acquainted with the principle stated by Aristotle that the welfare of society depended upon "the predominance of its *superior* parts," a proposition with which it is not reasonable to disagree. Certainly, no one would

advance the proposition that the welfare of society depends upon "the predominance of its *inferior* parts." In Calhoun's time the slaves (many brought from Africa) certainly could not be classified as being a "*superior* part" of southern society. But all that certainly did not commit Calhoun to the proposition that the Negro was never to be free and never to participate in government. Mrs. Coit in her book on Calhoun (page 301) has this to say: "Calhoun conceded that once the slave had reached a state of moral and intellectual elevation, it would be to the master's interest 'to raise him' to the level of political equality, for he would [because of such cultural advance, if it occurred] then 'be destitute of all power' to 'destroy liberty.'"

The attitudes of the Hebrew-Christian religions have been pretty ambiguous on this question of slavery. Tolerance toward slavery was a definite feature of the Hebrew religion. Further, to our knowledge there is not one word in the whole New Testament condemning slavery *in principle.* The Apostle Paul sent a runaway slave, named Onesimus, back to his master — to slavery; see Paul's *Letter to Philemon,* the owner of the slave. The Christian religion therefore, should not adopt a "too holy" attitude in condemning others who have failed to condemn slavery.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that although the history of the doctrine and attitude of Christianity toward slavery is not above reproach, *its principles unqualifiedly condemn slavery* as such. The Sixth Commandment says, Thou shalt not kill, which obviously includes, Thou shalt not coerce. Slavery, being coercion, is, *in principle,* therefore unqualifiedly wrong. Anyone who as a Christian does not admit the principle that slavery is wrong is really inconsistent with himself.

The probable reason for confusion, among honest Christians, between their religious principles and their acceptance of slavery, is that *in practice,* slavery appeared *the lesser of evils.* It is said that slavery originally began when war became more humane. In violent societies the tribe which was defeated was exterminated. Readers of the Hebrew Bible will readily recall the history of the destruction of Jericho, and the *general* requirement that the whole native Palestinian population be put to the sword — young and old, men and women, everybody from the graybeard to the newborn infant! Slavery became a substitute for such extermination.

The Hivites of Gibeon (see Joshua 9) by a ruse obtained a league with the Israelites. If they had let events run their course, they would have been exterminated. Instead, although they saved their lives, they fell practically into slavery; they were designated by Joshua to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water."

Slavery in early societies also became a substitute for imprisonment as well as for extermination. A creditor in primitive societies, where there was very little property held by anybody (let alone a debtor), had recourse to obtain payment through flogging, imprisonment or personal services (in the form of slavery, complete or modified). Neither flogging nor imprisonment is compensation or correction for being a voluntary or involuntary debtor. Maybe the debtor was often too irresponsible for his own welfare; maybe lazy; maybe stupid; maybe undisciplined. Under the circumstances slavery, in some form or other, may have appeared the lesser of evils, and from a *then* practical standpoint the best solution. Who are we, living in a different age and under different circumstances, to declare that Moses, Christ and Paul (and the nations of the world generally in the past) were wholly delinquent in not demanding immediate and unqualified discontinuance of slavery.

On the moral issue of slavery, Abraham Lincoln saw the issue more clearly than Calhoun. Lincoln took an unqualified position, to wit: (1) slavery was in principle wrong; (2) any extension must be resisted; (3) he would leave it alone where it existed by contract (that is, by provision in the Constitution). Calhoun and his associates were (1) not prepared to agree that slavery was in principle wrong; (2) demanded its extension beyond where it existed in the original southern territory; and (3) refused to be satisfied to leave slavery only in the territory where it originally existed.

But here again it is necessary to "see" the *whole* picture. And when we look at the whole (the role of government) we estimate that Lincoln was wrong and Calhoun right; but when we look at the *part* (slavery), then we estimate that Lincoln was right and Calhoun wrong. We shall endeavor to explain this in later articles in future issues. The character of the *whole* picture to which we refer will require careful and somewhat lengthy delineation.

Calhoun On Loyalty, A Question On Which He Is Unjustly Suspected

Two charges may be made against Calhoun: (1) that he was wrong on slavery; (2) that he fomented rebellion and that he was thereby disloyal.

This second charge — that Calhoun was a rebel, disloyal, a traitor, a cause of the Civil War which broke ten years after his death — is unjust. It will take considerable evidence to answer the charge, but here at the beginning of a consideration of Calhoun's ideas, some attention should be devoted to it, so that there will not be a prejudicial undercurrent of distrust to Calhoun on a false ground.

Basically, Calhoun was a defender of *liberty*.* Now, it is possible to accuse everyone who favors liberty of being a rebel and of being disloyal. But, on reflection, no one will wish to assert that because a man loves liberty that therefore he is a rebel. Some careful discrimination and exact distinctions are necessary to avoid so rash a conclusion.

This "injustice" to Calhoun also afflicts this publication. When we proclaim liberty and put it in the form of the proposition that we should obey God rather than men — and therefore sometimes disobey and resist government — then our best friends look at us doubtingly and disapprovingly and say, "You would not advocate disobedience to the law would you?" We have already referred to that earlier in this issue.

Generally, we see liberty and government as Calhoun did. In so far as there is still a difference, Calhoun was more inclined to obey than we are. Consider what Mrs. Coit reports Calhoun as saying in connection with matters pertaining to the War of 1812.

On page 86 she quotes Calhoun as follows:

> "The worst of laws ought to be respected while they remain laws."

We ourselves could not accept that.

On February 25, 1814 Calhoun made a speech on the Loan Bill. Part of a paragraph in it reads as follows:

> A minority has no "right to involve the country in ruin . . . How far a minority in a state of war may justly oppose the measures of Government is a question of the

*This is exclusive of the Negro race and slavery question.

> greatest delicacy . . . An upright citizen will do no act, whatever his opinion of the war, to put his country in the power of the enemy . . . Like the system of our state and General governments — within they are many, — to the world but one, — so . . . with parties . . . in relation to other nations there ought only to be the American people . . . This sympathy of the whole with . . . every part . . . constitutes our real union. When it ceases . . . we shall cease to be one nation. (Calhoun, Speech on the Loan Bill, February 25, 1814, Works II, p. 94 ff.)

Calhoun's name is inseparably connected with *nullification,* the idea that some laws of a government (in this case the Federal government of the United States) could be declared to be null and void in some state, such as South Carolina, the state that Calhoun represented. Now, nullification is not treason; nor is it even secession; nor is it a general rebellion; it simply says that a specific law passed by a legislature is not to be put into effect in a specific area. *Treason* is one thing, helping an enemy; *secession* is something far less drastic and of an altogether different character; it is a withdrawal; *rebellion* is something still less than secession, especially if it is rebellion on a limited subject rather than a general rebellion; and finally *nullification* is something still less even than rebellion.

Readers who have questioned the attitude of Progressive Calvinism about disobeying laws (when we say that men should obey God rather than men) seem to believe that we might be traitors, or secessionists, or rebels against legitimate government. We are not; we are what Calhoun was; we are *nullifiers.* We say that we intend to neglect or reject a specific law which requires that we do something contrary to the Law of God, as if the man-made law did not exist; we, in effect, *nullify* laws contrary to the Law of God.

The Amish about whom we wrote in the third article in this issue are *nullifiers* in regard to the Old Age and Survivors Insurance System (see page 325f.). We respect them for being nullifiers.

Calhoun was the first man (to our knowledge) to formulate the doctrine of nullification in distinction from the doctrine of rebellion. That "nullifying" by Calhoun, in our opinion, was

genuinely Biblical. Calhoun we believe was in the right, according to the Law of God, and before the bar of justice and equity.

Calhoun did not become a nullifier on the slavery question *but on the tariff question.* He was "as right as rain" on that, as we propose to show in the next issue. Furthermore, the *principle* that underlay Calhoun's *nullification* on the tariff question was a Biblical principle. The maintenance of a peaceful and beneficent society depends on the general acceptance of Calhoun's nullification principle. We plan to devote several issues to the clarification of this fundamental idea.

"The Union! Next To Our Liberties Most Dear"

In the spring of 1830 at the Jefferson Day dinner of the Democratic Party two toasts were given which tell of two philosophies of government — Andrew Jackson's and John C. Calhoun's.

The dinner took place at the Indian Queen Hotel. Calhoun and his colleague, Hayne, expected support from President Andrew Jackson on their doctrine of nullification. But Calhoun and Hayne miscalculated. At this dinner Jackson, the President, intended to test Calhoun, the Vice-President, by means of a challenging toast. There were to be 24 toasts. Of the 24, one would be Jackson's and one would be Calhoun's.

Mrs. Coit, in the book already mentioned, wrote:

> 'Dinner was served. From the head and foot of the central table, Calhoun and Jackson eyed each other, toyed with their food. Slowly the tension in the room increased. A plot had been uncovered to assassinate Jackson; already so it was said, medals had been struck off: 'John C. Calhoun, First President of the Confederate States of America.'[*] And as if by magnetic power, all eyes were drawn to the two central figures, so different and yet so alike, towering head and shoulders above most of the other men in the room, their drawn faces and thin compressed lips. Each was waiting . . ." (p. 212.)

Eventually, the toastmaster called on President Jackson to present his toast. Jackson rose and looking point blank at Calhoun, gave this toast:

*Grossly false rumor, of course—Editor.

"*Our Union — it must be preserved*"

Jackson raised his glass. Every eye in the room was watching whether Calhoun would raise his glass and drink to the toast or whether he would refuse.

Awkwardly Calhoun fumbled for his glass, and as in a trance finally drank. The tension quieted; some people left.

After order was restored, it was Calhoun's turn to give the toast. He rose, picked up his glass, and slowly in a clear voice gave his toast:

"*The Union! Next to our liberties, most dear*"

This toast is different from Jackson's. In fact, there is a world of difference!

We would drink to Calhoun's toast:

"The Union. *Next to our liberties,* most dear."

Some put government first. Others put liberty first. The problem is a delicate one. Anyone who reads Calhoun's *A Disquisition on Government* will realize that Calhoun put an extraordinary value on government. But his toast put *liberty first.* And he was right.

Michel de Montaigne On Blind Obedience To Government

One of the essays by Michel de Montaigne (1533-92), a French essayist, has the title "Of Custom, and Changing of Laws."

Here are some quotations from Montaigne's essay to show to what extent Montaigne believed that we ought to obey the law, whether it is good or bad.

> The Christian religion has all the marks of the utmost utility and justice: but none more manifest than the severe injunction it lays indifferently upon all to yield absolute obedience to the civil magistrate, and to maintain and defend the laws. Of which, what a wonderful example has the divine wisdom left us, that, to establish the salvation of mankind, and to conduct His glorious victory over death and sin, would do it after no other way, but at the mercy of our ordinary forms of justice, subjecting the progress and issue of so high and so salutiferous an effect, to the blindness and injustice of our customs and observances; . . .

What Montaigne here teaches is an extreme doctrine. He alleges that the whole program of salvation outlined by the Christian religion depended upon an event, the crucifixion of Christ, which consisted in blind obedience to human injustice. Montaigne's argument is that we similarly should submit to injustice and evil!

At another point he writes:

> And freely to speak my thoughts, it argues a strange self-love and great presumption to be so fond of one's own opinions, that a public peace must be overthrown to establish them, and to introduce so many inevitable mischiefs, and so dreadful a corruption of manners as a civil war and the mutations of state consequent to it, . . .

Montaigne recommends a double-standard of conduct, namely, being independent and different to others in one's subjective private life, but being a conformist in all public matters. This is what he says:

> . . . a wise man ought, within, to withdraw and retire his soul from the crowd, and there keep it at liberty and in power to judge freely of things; but, as to externals absolutely to follow and conform himself to the fashion of the time. Public society has nothing to do with our thoughts, but the rest, as our actions, our labors, our fortunes, and our lives, we are to lend and abandon them to its service, and to the common opinion; as did that good and great Socrates who refused to preserve his life by a disobedience to the magistrate, though a very wicked and unjust one: for it is the *rule of rules, the general law of laws, that every one observe those of the place wherein he lives.* (The italics are ours.)

Here Montaigne goes so far as to declare that it is "the rule of rules and the general law of laws" to obey completely the laws of the country regardless of everything. We deny that it is "the rule of rules and the general law of laws" to obey a Stalin or a Khrushchev, but that is what Montaigne proposed.

Curiously, however, at the end of the last paragraph in the essay Montaigne qualifies everything that he has previously written. Here he admits that a country ought not be permitted to be ruined by the maintenance of bad laws, and he even recommends subterfuge to escape the consequences of bad laws.

The difference between Calhoun and Montaigne is great. Calhoun believed that bad laws should be nullified; Montaigne believed that bad laws should be obeyed. Calhoun, however, as we shall show, was extremely cautious in regard to the question of nullifying any law. He was no rash innovator; we have already quoted him as writing "the worst of laws ought to be respected while they remain laws"; however, Calhoun did not believe that a law remained a law after it had been nullified. And of course, Montaigne could not hold unqualifiedly to his idea of absolute obedience either. In practice, theory bows to the realities of "circumstances."

The New Name For Progressive Calvinism Again

In the October issue readers were informed that beginning January 1959 the name of this publication would be changed, and we suggested a number of titles.

For various reasons we have already abandoned the names we then suggested. Presently we favor a title probably something as follows. The layout shows what the January 1959 issue may look like.

FIRST PRINCIPLES

(*or principia*) for all *human action* (especially in economics, religion, politics and business), and which underlie the general health and harmony of society.

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VOLUME V* JANUARY, 1959 NUMBER 1

The word *principia* is the plural for the Latin word *principium,* which means *first principle.* We aim to call attention to *first principles* in logical and moral questions in every field in which there

*First four volumes appeared as PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.

is human action; especially in economics, religion, politics, and business. Those *first principles* should be observed if society is to have real social health and if there is to be genuine harmony.

For us, *morals* are a subdivision of *logic,* in the sense that what true morality teaches must be logical, with logical defined as something which is consistent with the declared objectives. Many ideas are taught as *morality* which can be shown to be inconsistent with the declared or obvious aims. Such cases are (for us) cases of bad logic, but as the objective is usually meritorious, the means must be immoral. How can means that are unsuitable for a good end be anything else except immoral!

With change of name will go a change of policy. We no longer address ourselves to Calvinists specially. We address *all* men — atheists, agnostics, Mohammedans, Confucianists, universalists, unitarians, protestants of all persuasions, Catholics. If we endeavor to teach *first principles* in regard to human action then the message should be addressed to all. (However, our specific Calvinist slant on life will in no way be suppressed. Because it will be avowed, no reader need be apprehensive about there being any subtlety in the new program.)

All this is tentative yet, and we shall be glad to hear from readers who have suggestions. We shall regret losing any readers who might think (erroneously) that the content of FIRST PRINCIPLES will fail to harmonize with the content of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM in the past four years.

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